

EBB & FLOW

by Heather Shaw



I try to wait to write my Editor's Words in the hopes that procrastination will result in relevance between now and the printer and the post office. Sometimes though, like today, which is a few days past Valentine's, nothing much in the way of editorial is penetrating the fog of war. Did I say war? I mean downturn—or is that depression?—which in the book world is looking like defeat through attrition. All right, so there's also a lot of buzz about Kindle vs. Logic Plastic vs. the iPhone (when the question really should be 'where's the store where I can buy a book to read on any platform?'). Yes, and half of HarperCollins is gone—but that's attrition again. Alfred A. Knopf is dead and Jane Austen is back with zombie aliens...



But really, if I shut off the Google Reader and turn around, the world doesn't look so frightful. The Book of the Year Award finalist selections in the photography and art categories have been made (with huge pleasure) and are waiting to be shipped to the judges. There are bins of books ready to go to London and Bologna. And debut fiction, one of our features for the May/June issue, is sorted and stacked and looks enticing enough to read on a train, on a plane...on a phone. The mailman continues to heave boxes and boxes of paperbacks and hardcovers up our steep stairs; PDF files continue to fill my online mailbox; the phone blinks with book reps calling; in other words, the words and

pictures keep piling up (accreting?). One way or another, people still have something to say and are finding a way to say it with words and pictures.

Speaking of which, our children's picture book feature (this issue, page 18) announcement brought record amounts of books into the office. I read every single one of them, and even then had a hard time thinning the selection to fit into four giant shipping boxes. I don't envy reviewer Elizabeth Breau's hard choices, but I'm proud of her decision to address the rather new audience of middle readers, and books with pictures that deal with difficult or complicated issues.

Difficult is the byword for our travel feature as well (page 24), as the intrepid trekker moves beyond mere vacation to adventure, pilgrimage, and wanderlust gratification. And don't miss the section on food (page 28) with its selection of books that illuminate the journey from seed to shopping cart.

Rebecca West said that there was a definite process by which one made people into friends, and it involved talking to them and listening to them for hours at a time. Managing Editor Whitney Hallberg spent days and weeks with romance novels, listening to the hopes and fears of all manner of heroines (page 22). She's sure you'll find some friends among these books.

And from all of us here at *ForeWord*, we are always listening, discussing, willing to talk. **F**

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